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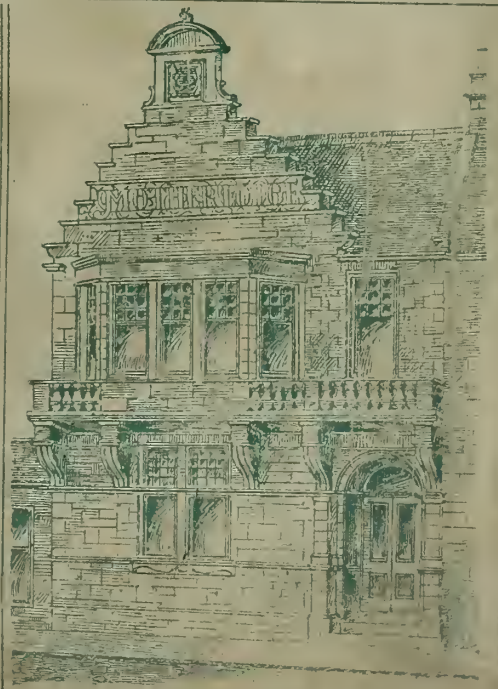

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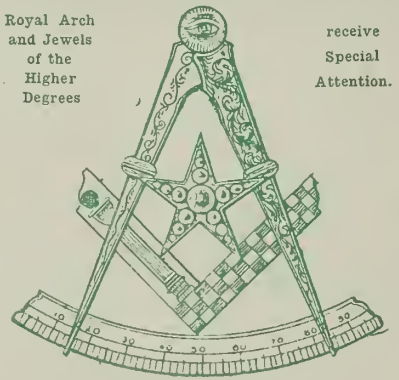

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HISTORY OF MOTHER LODGE, KILWINNING.

"MOTHER KILWINNING,"

BY

THE REV. WILLIAM LEE KER, M.A., CHAPLAIN.

IT is the proud boast of Segtonians that the Free Mason Lodges of Scotland, high and low of them, rich and poor of them, must admit that Kilwinning Lodge is the mother of them all. Some people, indeed, may think that Kilwinning has a great deal to account for in consequence of the position which her Masonic Lodge occupies, and some people have not been slow either to say or to print that this is so—for Free Masonry has not always been alluded to in the most honourable terms. In truth, there is no society of men which has run the gauntlet of so much jeering and contempt on the one hand, or which has been so much belauded and glorified on the other. People somehow don't seem to get into a sober strain of criticism when they allude to the Craft. Sometimes it is the pretensions of Free Masons to the antiquity of their order that are held up to ridicule, sometimes a genial smile suffuses the countenances of the bystanders when reference is made to the high-sounding titles which the brethren apply to each other, and sometimes we members of the mystic Craft have to listen to no small amount of good-natured banter—adverse criticisms to Masonry are invariably good-natured—on account of the secrets which, as Masons, we profess to hold. What member of the Craft has not had to listen to such kindly jeering—some of my brethren may think I should rather call it foolish jesting—as this. "What's the secret word, now, about which you make so much fuss? Is there any secret word at all? If so, is it beef and greens? And why do you keep a goat with which to frighten the newly-made apprentices? Where do you keep your goat? Is it true that you have some tampering with the powers of darkness, such tampering with the powers of darkness as that you can raise up sulphurous odours and cause the clanking of the chains which, but for your influence, would never be heard beyond the borders of the nether world? And your origin

is lost in the mists of antiquity! You are as old as Solomon's temple, aren't you? or perhaps you go further back, to the building of Babel for example, don't you? Isn't this one of the songs you sing?:

> "'Our first Father Adam, deny it who can,
> A mason was made as soon as a man;
> And a fig-leaf apron at first wore he,
> In token of love to Masonry.'"

Of course every free and accepted Mason has had to listen to language like this. And, if language like this is to be listened to from what I might call funny, good-natured critics of Free Masonry, then we have also to read language like the following from earnest, good-natured critics: "The history of Free Masonry has been overlaid with fiction and absurdity, partly from an exaggerated estimate of its importance in the development of architecture, and partly from a wish to connect mediæval Masonry with the institution that passes under the same name at the present day. Modern (or so-called speculative) Free Masonry is an innocent mystification unconnected either with the building Craft or with architecture." According to this writer there is evidently "nothing in it," and there never has been anything in Free Masonry. Of course Free Masons have a different story to tell of the Craft. They don't indeed divulge all they can say for nothing. They make a charge upon all who would join their society. As, however, becomes brethren whose instincts are kindly and social, while they insist upon their would-be members being recommended as men of good moral character, they initiate into the mysteries of Free Masonry those who are worthy, for a comparatively small sum, and to all who are thus initiated they cheerfully reveal their secrets and show their light. But Free Masonry does not conceal everything in connection with it. On the contrary, it noises abroad some of its doctrines and openly declares some of its aims to the wide, wide world, and it announces its honorary titles and openly avows its age to all mankind. And surely, so far as its principles are known to the world, they must be received with approval. No critic will venture to speak disparagingly of Free Masonry up to the knowledge that he has of the Craft. We may be we are bantered about our claim for being members of a society something like 5895 years old, and about ministers and other professional gentlemen, and even noblemen, wearing aprons like the gentler sex: but we Free Masons can turn aside the arrows of ridicule by pointing to our aims, which everyone can understand. For the aim of Free Masonry is, among other things, to extend the principles of universal brotherhood, to impress upon all men the duty and privilege of wisely caring for the poor, the needy, and the distressed; and we know we may flaunt that aim in the eyes of the world and not need to be ashamed. An excellent member of the Craft, the late Lord Durham, said on a memorable occasion "I have always felt it my duty to encourage the principle and practice of Free Masonry, because it powerfully develops all social and benevolent affections, because it mitigates the bitterness of political and theological controversy, because it affords the neutral ground on which all ranks and classes of

men can meet in perfect equality, and associate without degradation or mortification, whether for purposes of moral instruction or social intercourse." Oh, yes! Cowans may banter us as they please; but our aims are high and noble. As the old song has it –

"We meet like true friends on the level,
And lovingly part on the square;
Alike we respect king and beggar,
Provided they're just and sincere.

"There's some foolish people reject us,
For which they are highly to blame;
They cannot show any objection,
Or reason for doing the same."

But at anyrate, whatever good or evil, praise or blame, is to be associated with Free Masonry in Scotland, Mother Kilwinning must specially bear the brunt of the one or receive the applause of the other, for Mother Kilwinning is just what her name implies – she is the mother, directly or indirectly, of all the Masonic Lodges in Scotland. Nor is this claim made in any but its broadest sense. It is not enough, for example, to concede that Kilwinning is "the seat of the first established Scotch Lodge." It must also be admitted that she is the Mother Lodge of Scotland. We don't like to hear her spoken of as if she had been a dry stock. That might represent her – it would represent her as surrounded with a halo of antiquity, and so entitled to respect; but it leaves her alone a solitary lodge, basking in the light of the mystic Craft, and never doing anything to propagate the system with which we Free Masons associate so much that is practically and theoretically good. And we don't like this. If it were true, we would respect her for her age, but would stigmatise her for her supineness, for her selfishness. No, we members of Mother Kilwinning assert that Kilwinning is the "seat of the first established Scotch Lodge," and also, that the Lodge of Kilwinning is the Mother Lodge of all the Scotch Lodges. These are all her daughters to whom, directly or indirectly, she gave life. Ay, and this much is conceded now on almost all hands. Certainly we can safely say this much has for nearly a century now been admitted by the great authority to which all loyal sons of the light strive invariably to yield the Grand Lodge of Scotland. In the year 1807 the Grand Lodge placed the Lodge of Kilwinning as the first on its roll, called it Mother Kilwinning, and named it No. 0. It did not indeed always do this. For some years, on account of a mistaken principle which it adopted at the beginning of its own existence, viz., the principle that that Lodge should be placed highest on its roll whose records extended furthest back, it placed Mother Kilwinning second on its list. And the poor old Mother was very sad when this happened. She did not say much. How could she? She was far away in a village of Ayrshire, and those who had, as she thought, insulted her, lived and exercised power in the Metropolis of the country. But though eager to be loyal to the Grand Lodge, as she is now, nevertheless she could not submit to the position assigned to her. So she waited and worked. And at length the Grand Lodge saw the mistake it had made, and it wasn't a bit ashamed to acknowledge and rectify its mistake, and

so it placed the Grand Old Mother Lodge in her right position—the first on her roll, by the name of the Mother Lodge. And what the Grand Lodge has done the Masonic world has appreciated. Yes; and we members of Mother Kilwinning are quite proud of our being recognised as the oldest and the Mother Lodge of Scotland. To be the founder of a series of Lodges, which have had existence in our native land for so many centuries, is not a small matter. To be the first established, and the propagator of a Society whose members have often been the noblest of the land, into whose ranks princes and potentates have thought it an honour to enter, a Society whose good intentions, whose integrity, and whose loyalty have commended it to the Government of the country when the exigencies of the times seemed to call for the extinction of all other secret societies, is a matter of which we Segtonians, and especially Masonic Segtonians, are justly proud.

But, "softly, softly," some reader may exclaim, "are you not going too quick? Are you not assuming too much? Don't you know that some of the greatest Masonic authorities have very distinctly averred, for all that the Grand Lodge has said and done, that Mother Kilwinning cannot establish her claim to be the oldest Lodge in Scotland, and is, in fact, not the Mother Lodge of Scotland?" To this the writer of this brochure feels bound to reply—"'Tis true, 'tis pity, pity 'tis, 'tis true." Nor may he take this opportunity of showing, as he thinks he can show, that all such denials of the priority and original supremacy of Mother Kilwinning are—well, are contrary to the truth. This is not the time for opening up a controversy. And yet, as a true son of Mother Kilwinning, the writer feels he must indicate, just indicate, here how he thinks the arguments in favour of Mother Kilwinning might be defended.

Some people, for example, seek to set aside Mother Kilwinning's claim by saying—"It's all nonsense to talk about Mother Kilwinning being so old. She is just like all people who are admittedly old, and they always try to make themselves older than they are. The nonagenarian is sure to speak of herself as bordering on a hundred. The fact is, you say, that Mother Kilwinning dates from 1140, because Mother Kilwinning originated during the erection of Kilwinning Abbey; but Kilwinning Abbey did not exist till long after that date. A famous architect has examined the ruins of the Abbey, and he can show distinctly that the Abbey could not possibly be founded earlier than the date "A.D. 1220." Well, so it is argued, and then some get afraid and fancy that Kilwinning Lodge cannot be so old as it is usually called. But the argument won't stand investigation. We don't doubt the expert's cleverness and ingenuity and desire to be fair. But we say he came to a wrong conclusion. For, as a matter of fact, recorded by history, there was an Abbot of Kilwinning signing charters in the year 1201 A.D.; and we argue that when there was an Abbot of Kilwinning there must have been an Abbey. And we add that a pound of history like this is worth no end of loads of theories formed from researches among ruins, and that this supports very materially the contention that Kilwinning Abbey was founded, say, about the middle of the twelfth century—about,

that is, the year 1140 -and that it was about this time also that the first temple of Free Masonry was instituted. It is not so easy, therefore, to make Mother Kilwinning younger than she says she is, as some good people imagine.

But no sooner do we put the matter right on this point than some turn round and say that, even if it be granted that Kilwinning Abbey was founded in 1140, and that Mother Kilwinning was established in the same year, it does not follow that the Kilwinning Lodge is the oldest in Scotland. The truth is, as all the world knows, that Free Masonry was doubtlessly introduced into Scotland by the Masons who built the grand Gothic structures that reared their lofty heads during, or immediately before, the twelfth century. Accordingly, Free Masonry would be instituted in the land in keeping with the times at which these establishments were founded; and therefore, wherever the first abbey or religious house was built, there the first meetings of the Craft would be held. Since, therefore, according to some, "the building, or rather restoring, the old Cathedral in Glasgow" took place in the year 1057, and that Holyrood, Kelso and Melrose Abbeys were founded, the first two in the year 1128, and the last in 1136, it follows that the first Lodge of Free Masons would be instituted in Glasgow, the second in Edinburgh or Kelso, and the third in Melrose. And, of course, if all this is conceded, then poor Mother Kilwinning must take a back seat, perhaps we should rather say a new chair, seeing that Kilwinning Abbey doesn't claim a more ancient pedigree than that which dates from 1140. But the truth is that we don't admit all this cut-and-dry argument about how Free Masonry was necessarily instituted in Scotland. It is all very well to say in the 19th century how things were sure to have been done in the 12th century, but it is not so easy to prove what we say; and there's one thing at the very outset just a little against these theorists- viz., they don't quite agree among themselves. "Mary's Chapel" won't give in to "Lodge of Glasgow St. John 3 *bis*," although, of course, it should do if the argument were well founded. But the truth is this, the argument is not well founded. The Masons of the 12th century would just be like other people; and where there was a clear-headed, influential man, there would be pre-eminence, and steps taken never thought of elsewhere. Accordingly, since all tradition, legend as it is commonly called, associates Mother Kilwinning with being the first lodge, it seems natural to argue that the Chief Mason at the erection of Kilwinning Abbey was an influential person, who did what none of the other Master Masons did —viz., focussed Free Masonry, and directed all Masonic eyes to where he lived and acted. What happened, indeed, is well put by a Masonic authority—"It is probable the celebrity of the Master Mason from Cologne, who resided at Kilwinning during the building of the Abbey, and the grand communication said to have been held there under his presidency, first directed Masonic attention to that town." That is well put, and strikes the nail on the head. It shows that, however natural it is to argue that Free Masonry would be instituted either at Glasgow or Edinburgh before being thought of at Kilwinning, nevertheless the prominence of the Master Mason from Cologne placed him

in the position of importance led him to form a true Masonic brotherhood from which emanated the light which gradually irradiated the land.

But these are not the only methods that have been adopted to dim the Masonic renown of Kilwinning Lodge. There are some people very angry with Mother Kilwinning for daring to claim any priority or supremacy — because of the place in which she lives, because of the obscurity of her location. Had she, virtually say these critics, been a little nearer the "hub" of the universe, they could have had some faith in her claims, but to be either very old or very great and live at Kilwinning, the thing's absurd. Poor Mother Kilwinning, what a pity she was born and brought up where she was! This argument of lowly birth and obscure life, indeed, is a very favourite one with some of Kilwinning's most distinguished opponents. They write thus, for example "Accepting, as he (Mr. Laurie) does, the legend pointing to Ayrshire as the birth place of Scottish Masonry, he fixes on the *isolated village of Kilwinning* as the locality in which were always held the Head Masonic Courts. . . . He does not seem to have been staggered in his belief . . . by reflecting on the improbability of Masons from Aberdeen, Perth, St. Andrews, Dundee, Edinburgh, and other places . . . travelling to *a distant, obscure, hamlet* to adjust differences." "Glasgow was, in all probability, the first to escape from the jurisdiction of Kilwinning; and in the eternal fitness of things, there do seem to be very grave objections to an *insignificant* place, which claimed to be the source of Scottish Free Masonry, possessing authority over an important city like Glasgow, which, even at that time, was certainly not a likely district for the deacon of a lodge holding its head court in an upper chamber in a *small country village* to have any rule or power over, Masonically or otherwise." Evidently the location of the Mother Lodge, and the poverty of its surroundings, are an awful sin in some people's eyes. But let us see what all this amounts to. Apparently, then, the argument against Mother Kilwinning's claim, on the ground just stated, is simply this, that it was not in keeping with "the eternal fitness of things" that Kilwinning, a village so obscure and far away, could ever be supreme in matters Masonic in Scotland. But the writer has to say, "Gently, gently," to those who argue thus. First, people should never be too sure as to what is in keeping with "the eternal fitness of things." Important, very important transactions have taken place in upper rooms and in obscure villages. People should remember that there is such a place as Nazareth in the history of the world, and such a place as Iona in the history of Scotland. But, second, it is distinctly, oh, very distinctly and emphatically, denied that Kilwinning was an obscure village, either at the time Mother Kilwinning began the race of life or during the time in which her children believe she reigned supreme in matters Masonic. Alas! the glory of Kilwinning has long departed. Nowadays it is an obscure village, or little more, with a population of only between three and four thousand inhabitants. It stands to Edinburgh, for example, if one might dare to institute a comparison, as

Edinburgh stands to London. But, then, we boldly deny that it was always thus; we boldly deny that Kilwinning was obscure when Mother Kilwinning first held her court in it, and during the centuries that no other claimant opposed her. Kilwinning, so far from being obscure in the middle of the twelfth century, was one of the great centres of the land. It was the spot towards which the eyes of the virtual ruler of the land, Sir Hugh de Morville, the High Constable of Scotland, were directed about the year 1140, when he was casting it in his mind where he should build a temple for the worship of God, for he knew it to be the spot rendered sacred by the cult of Christianity from the days of St. Winning, about the beginning of the eighth century—a spot, indeed, in which the High Constable would probably be able to gaze upon the ruins of the huts and wooden church of the Culdees, and, perhaps, upon some of the relics of the great St. Winning himself, just as we now contemplate the crumbling remains of the magnificent Abbey, which, on the site so well known, so suggestive, so sacred, he ultimately determined to rear to the glory of God. And during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, the time at which we are persuaded the supremacy and age of Mother Kilwinning were never questioned, who that knows anything about our history will venture on saying that Kilwinning was obscure. Obscure! with the Abbots of Kilwinning occupying some of the foremost places in the land; with the Abbots of Kilwinning prominent as Members of the Court and as Counsellors of Kings! Obscure! when of one of Kilwinning Abbots it is asserted that he boldly took the field with many followers in the sad days of Flodden, and himself behaved so bravely that the poet has recorded of him:

> "This bishop bold, this bastard blest,
> With other bishops in his band;
> And abbots eke bold as the rest,
> For beagle rods took bills in hand."

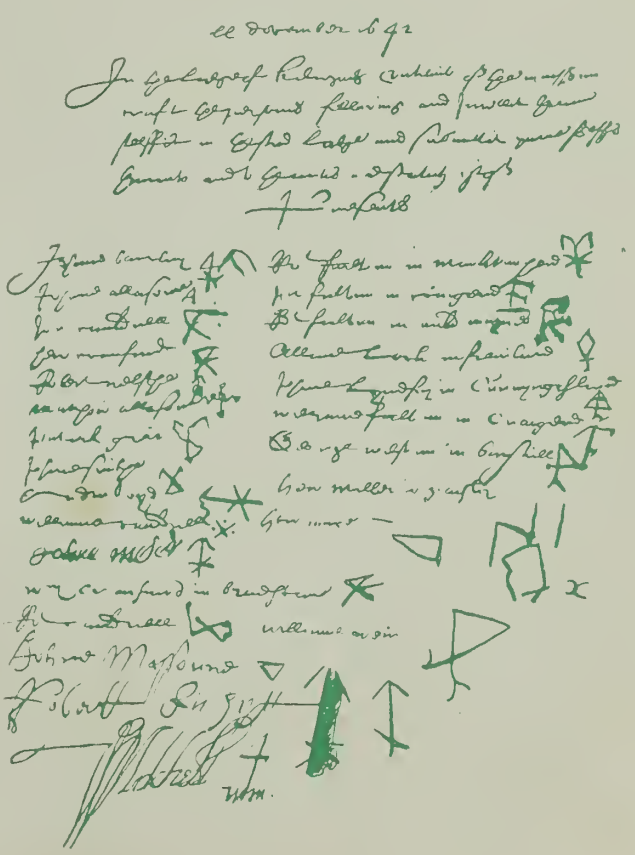
Oh, we modern Segtonians bow our heads when the present condition of Kilwinning is spoken of. Not, indeed, that we have anything to be ashamed of, for obscurity is not necessarily associated with disgrace. But we know we are obscure. On the other hand, we glory in the past, and we won't admit, we strenuously deny, that Masonry could not possibly be supreme here in Scotland because of our obscurity in the grand days of old.

Now, perhaps I should let this matter alone, and say no more about it; but to a true Segtonian it's a great temptation at any time to stand up for Kilwinning, so I cannot resist continuing for another page our defence of the age and supremacy of Mother Kilwinning by replying to another argument by which her claims are attempted to be set aside. It is often said that we, believing in the rights of Mother Kilwinning, have nothing but tradition in favour of her priority and original supremacy. "All your stories," it is said, "on which you found your claims are just legends. You have no historical proof with which to establish anything till 1599." Well, now, let us just admit this. But how stands the case? We *have* legends; we *have* traditions in favour

of Mother Kilwinning's priority and supremacy. Nobody denies that and some of them are splendid legends. For example, we have this legend, viz., "In 1286, James, Lord Stewart of Scotland, initiated the Earls of Ulster and Gloucester into the Mother Lodge." And we have this also: "In 1314 the Masonic Order of Heredum de Kilwinning was founded by King Robert the Bruce." Then we have this tradition: "In 1491, King James the Fourth held a Masonic festival at Kilwinning." And we have what every Mason knows as the splendid tradition, believed in so far back as 1658, in which the Lodge of Perth declares that Kilwinning temple of Free Masons was the temple which was first instituted in Scotland, and that its foundation was laid about the year 1190. It is abundantly easily proved then that Kilwinning Lodge has traditions asserting its priority and supremacy. Not only so, but here is a curious thing, no other Lodge has any such traditions. No old story, no good legend, is to be found weaving its shadowy words round any other Lodge in Scotland. At least, it will be universally conceded that no other Lodge is so strong in legends as the Mother Lodge. And what are we to make of this? Are we just to shrug our shoulders and say, "there's nothing in it?" On the contrary, are we not to say there's a great deal in it? How did these traditions arise? What did they spring out of? How did they arise in connection with a town so far away from such centres as Edinburgh and Glasgow as Kilwinning is? Had they clustered round Holyrood, or Glasgow Cathedral, or Melrose Abbey, one would have said there is something in it; but that they should all be connected with Kilwinning shows that there is something very important in it, something very like proof of the Mother Lodge's original supremacy in it. Surely these shadows show where the sun was shining, and surely they warrant us in believing that great Masonic gatherings took place at Kilwinning in the days of yore; that towards the banks of the Garnock many a weary brother turned his footsteps as the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries passed away, and that at Kilwinning, far from the strife of courts and the din of cities, kings and potentates, as brothers clasped the hands of brothers as only Free Masons can, and devoted their hours of leisure in discussing important questions, and especially Masonic questions, by which the Fatherland could be made greater and better. Yes, and instead of pooh-poohing the arguments from tradition in favour of Mother Kilwinning, as some have done, ought not the members of the Craft, who admittedly trust a good deal to unwritten history, to be delighted to think that, concerning Free Masonry in Scotland, during the centuries in which almost all is a blank, we have such pleasant legendary indications of the distinguished position Free Masonry then occupied - a position so important that kings and nobles, it may be even from Aberdeen and Perth, and certainly from Glasgow and Edinburgh, were lured to seek its centre, even though that centre was far away at Kilwinning, in Ayrshire—just as the muse in the eighteenth century, when on the outlook for a national poet, after searching the length and breadth of the land, felt it necessary to pass over splendid cities and busy towns, and settle down on a cold January morning in a

lonely spot in a lonely cottage, only a few miles distant from the place on which the first Masonic Temple was erected about the year 1140? But I must- even without a word of comment on Williame Schaw's statutes -leave this interesting subject of seeking to vindicate the wisdom and justice of the Grand Lodge, alike in the respect to the title she has given, and the number she has allocated to the Old Lodge of Kilwinning. I must pass on to non-controversial matter, and refer to some interesting facts in connection with the Mother Lodge, which a careful perusal of her records have suggested, referring all who would learn the terms of her charters, and the public functions in which she has taken a part, to the valuable history of the Mother Lodge by our late well-known and respected townsman and friend, Robert Wylie. Now, on looking over the most interesting records, there are certain things so different, for example, from what one finds in ecclesiastical or political records that one's attention is distinctly drawn to them. These are certain marks which each practical Free Mason had. Now, of course, all Masons knew what these marks meant; but as this essay is for general readers I must explain about them.

Here, for example, is an exact copy of the oldest minute in the records:



The translation of this minute is as follows:—"20th Dec., 1642. In the Lodge of Kilwinning convened of the Mason Craft, the persons following, and enrolled themselves in the said lodge, and submitted themselves thereunto and to the Acts and Statutes thereof. Present: John Barclay, John Allason, John Cauldwell, Hew Crawford, Robert Welsch, Matthew Allason, Patrick Grier, John Smith, Andrew Boyd, William Cauldwell, John Meler, William Crawfurd in Braids, ane Robert Cauldwell, John Massoune, Rob. Quhytt, W. Mitchell, Robert Fultoun in Monktonheid, John Fultoun in Craigend, Robert Fultoun in Old Wynes, Allan Leck in Frierland, John Lindsay in Cunnyngesland, William Fultoun in Craigend, George Wilson in Bowsail, Hew Miller in Paisley, Hew Mure, William Weir."

Each person, it will be observed, who signs the minute puts his mark, and for very many years those who were practical Masons put a mark, some of one kind and some of another, after their names. Some of these are very like others, but all really different. And these marks, which each Mason chose for himself, were employed by these practical Masons at their work. That is to say, when A. B. did some work he put his mark on some prominent part of it, and C. D. and E. F. did the same. Accordingly, when the Master Mason went round to examine the work, he did not require to ask who did this or that; the mark of the workman who had done the work was distinctly before him. Marks, in short, were just like initials, but more artistic. If any one wishes to see illustrations of what has now been said, he will only require to visit the ruins of Kilwinning's famous abbey, and everywhere he will see the marks which the Masons of seven hundred years ago placed on their work. Perhaps, it should be added, that while reference has been made to these marks as if only in keeping with ancient custom, it is, of course, well known that this custom continues to prevail to the present day. Practical Masons of this 19th century just do as their progenitors did long ages ago they choose their respective marks. It has just been said that it was only the practical Masons—real workers with stone and lime who chose marks; but we find very early notice in the records of the admission into the ranks of Masonry, gentlemen who were not operative masons at all. These did not choose any marks to distinguish themselves by, seeing they never did anything in the way of building. For many years, indeed, the Free Masons got a little "mixed" upon this subject of admitting persons as Masons who were not Operative Masons. But this point was made clear on 20th Dec., 1756. On that day "The whole meeting unanimously agreed, for the future, that no person but an Operative Mason, or the son of an Operative Mason, shall be entered as an Operative Mason, but as a Gentleman Mason." And then the definition of Operative Mason is given, viz., "By Operative Mason is meant a working Mason or Builder in the above Act." And this continued till comparatively recent times, the Gentlemen Masons always paying a higher entrance fee than was expected from the Operative Masons.

When referring to practical Masons, in connection with the Mother Lodge, it should be noted that they were

careful in preventing those who were not accredited Masons from doing work as if they were. They called persons who were not according to the other members of the Craft skilled workmen, Cowans, and made it illegal for any either to work with them or to employ them. For example, here is an entry:—"Hew Mure, Kilmarnock, was mulcted £10 Scots for working with Cowans, and ordered not to work again with Cowans lest he receive more punishment." The Free Masons, therefore, kept their work to themselves. A Cowan had no chance of getting a job. It is said that there is nothing new under the sun. Certainly our present trade societies seem very much a revival or survival of the old Masonic methods. Cowans were boycotted.

So, also, when speaking of practical Free Masons in the olden times, as brought under our notice in Mother Kilwinning records, it should be noticed that if they acted at all up to their rules no wonder the houses of long ago lasted long. Here was one of the rules by which the Masons were guided:—"That they be honest and faithfull, and diligent in their calling, and deall uprightly with the Masters and Owners of the wark that they shall take upon hand, be it task nett and ffie or weekly wadges." Evidently the workmen were always to work on the square. And the Free Masons not only made laws for each other, but, as the records often show, they punished in some way, often by fining, those who violated them. "Kilwinning, Dec. 20, 1725.—The said day, the plurality of the Members of the Lodge Kilwinning being met, have enacted and ordered that W. and J. C. is discharged from entering the society of honest men belonging to the Lodge of Kilwinning, and also discharge every freeman to give them no stroke of work, under the penalty of twenty pounds Scots, until they be convinced of their crime."

Moreover, it should be distinctly noted that the practice of charity is evidently an old custom among the Masons. "20th Dec., 1736.—The said day the Lodge enacted that, from this time forth, there shall be ane annual payment made by every member of the Lodge to the box for the subsistence of poor brethren—Every gentleman, yearly, 1s. sterling; every working Mason, 6d. Whatever member is deficient at the year's end shall be distressed for the same, on a signed complaint to a justice of the peace or other magistrate, as his warrant obtained for this effect." The collection for "poor brethren" was to be systematically carried out. No one could shirk it. And this went on year after year, the accounts always showing distinctly how much had been paid away in charity, and to whom it had been paid. Alas, one must add, that the Free Masons were not always treated honourably by some of their "poor brethren." Their generosity was sometimes imposed upon, for, even in these good old times, there were some Masons shabby enough to do this. But, though charitable, the Free Masons were not going to be sat upon. Accordingly we find that when this dodging on the part of some of the poor had been attempted, the brethren, on 20th December, 1757, held a meeting, and "resolved that, for the future, there shall no charity be given to travelling brethren without an order from the Master or Warders, as the

Lodge has been imposed upon by persons receiving charity both here and at Irvine." Nor, indeed, was this the first time that the brethren had to protect themselves against "tramps." They early discovered that they required to be careful in their giving.

Before leaving this part of our subject, which refers specially to the ordinary conduct and character of the Free Masons, as described in the Records of Mother Kilwinning, it cannot be too distinctly stated that it would be impossible to find a class of men who could keep a secret better than they did. The most watchful reader could peruse these records, from 1642 to 1895, and yet never discover any reference to any word, or any grip, or any goat, or any chains, or anything with which this Society is said to perpetuate itself and cement its bonds of brotherhood. For hundreds and hundreds of years they have dwelt together in unity, and for centuries they have kept books, and recorded their transactions, but the only reference to anything withheld from the outside world is expressed simply by "the Lodge being opened," or "the Lodge was opened with the usual solemnities," and not much could be gathered from this. It is said and sung that "The world is in pain the secret to gain." It is known that cavesdroppers have tried by every conceivable method to learn what was going on within the guarded Lodge-room; that even one man, some say it was a woman, was able, on one occasion, to conceal himself or herself in the chimney, and by that means obtained the knowledge of what the Masons keep secret, but no good ever came of their doings. Report says but everybody knows the capacity for telling lies with which report is credited—that the man or woman who obtained the secret never got an opportunity of telling it, for that the brethren, in some awful way, put him or her safely away in some awful place—butchered him or her, in short—and buried the body out of sight. Ay, though Free Masons have even in thousands been married men, not even their good wives ever learned anything about Masonry from them. So true is this, that it has been said that the fact of it has lessened the ranks of the brotherhood: some wives, it is alleged, being so averse to having any secrets between themselves and their husbands, would not allow them "to be made Masons." Perhaps so. Only with respect to this, we who are Free Masons will be ready to say, that if there are never worse secrets than those of Free Masonry withheld by husbands from their wives, no real harm will be done. And the wives who do this are—well, the least said about what they are will be the soonest mended. "A word is enough to the wise." At any rate, the Free Masons, however free they be, have kept anything they have to keep to themselves. They can keep a secret.

But now I desire to say something respecting the Office-bearers of Mother Kilwinning and their titles, and some other things. And we are at no loss to present the Master with the names of the principal office-bearers for the last two hundred and fifty years. The present Secretary of the Lodge, Mr. Laurence Matheson, has drawn up a list of them as follows:

GRAND DEACONS.

A.D.	
1642	Johnne Barclay, Burgess of Irwin.
1643	Hew Craufurd.
1644	John Cauldwell.
1645	John Cauldwell.
1646	Mathew Allasone.
1647	Mathew Allasoun.
1648	John Smyth.
1649	William Cauldwell.
1650	Name of Deacon not given.
1651	John Smythe.
1652	Name of Deacon not given.
1653	John Corraith.
1654	John Miller.
1655	John Smith.
1656	John Caldwell.
1657	Robert Caruthe.
1658	William Cowane.
1659	John Smithe.
1660	John Caldwell.
1661	John Smyth.
1662	John Caldwell.
1663	John Smithe.
1664	John Allasoun.
1665	Robert Knoks.
1666	Mathew Caldwald.
1667	John Smith.
1668	Robert Foultoun.
1669	John Caldwald.
1670	Name of Deacon not given.
1671	John Smith.
1672	John Kennedie, Earl of Cassillis.
1673	Sir Alex. Cunyngham of Corshill.
1674	Alexander, 8th Earl of Eglingtoune. [Lord William Cochrane.]
1675	Alexander, 8th Earl of Eglingtoun.
1676	Alexander, 8th Earl of Eglintoun.
1677	William Cowane.
1678	Sir Alex. Cunyngham of Corshill.
1679	Allan Caldwell.
1680	John Allasoune.
1681	Name of Deacon not given.
1682	John Millar.
1683	Lodge opened by John Allasone.
1684	Name of Deacon not given.
1685	John Alasone.
1686	Name of Deacon not given.
1687	Thomas Caldwell.
1688	Name of Deacon not given.
1689	Thomas Caldwell.
1690 to 1703	Names of Deacons not given.
1704	Thomas Steinston.
1705	William Cowan.
1706	William Cowan.
1707	Thomas Stinston.
1708	Thomas Stinston.
1709	Andrew Cowan.
1710	Andrew Cowan.
1711	William Cowan.
1712	David Frew.
1713	Name of Deacon not given.
1714	Robert Gilmor.
1715	Name of Deacon not given.
1716	Robert Gilmor.
1717	Bryce Neiwin.
1718	Robert Bryson.
1719	Andrew Cowan.
1720	Robert Gilmore.
1721	Robert Gilmore.
1722	David Frew.
1723	Name of Deacon not given.
1724	Name of Deacon not given.
1725	William Montgomrie.
1726	Robert Montgomerie.
1727	David Mure.
1728	John Wheett.
1729	Robert Gillmor.
1730	James Neillson.
1731	William Alasson.
1732	James Anderson.

GRAND MASTERS.

1733	Robert Gilmore.
1734	David Mure.
1735	P. Montgomerie of Bourtreehill.

1736 - - - P. Montgomerie, Esq.
1737 - - - Sir D. Cunningham of Corshill.
1738 - - - P. Montgomerie of Bourtreehill.
1739 - - - Robert Gilmore.
1740 - - - Robert Mallison Esq.
1741 - - - William, 4th and last Earl of Kilmarnock, Most Worshipful Grand Master of Scotland.
1742 to 1752 - Alexander, 10th Earl of Eglintoune, Most Worshipful Grand Master of Scotland.
1753 - - - Claud Thomson, Esq.
1754 - - - Claud Thomson, Esq.
1755 to 1761 - Alexander, 10th Earl of Eglinton.
1762 - - - The Hon. Col. Montgomerie.
1763 - - - The Hon. Col. Montgomerie.
1764 to 1767 - Geo. Fullarton of Bartonholme.
1768 - - - Alexander, 10th Earl of Eglinton.
1769 - - - James Hadow.
1770 - - - James Hadow.
1771 to 1780 - Archibald, 11th Earl of Eglinton.
1781 to 1796 - Archibald, 11th Earl of Eglinton.
1797 - - - Alexander Hamilton of Grange.
1798 - - - Alexander Hamilton of Grange.
1799 to 1801 - Robert Mongomerie, Irvine.
1802 - - - Robt. Glasgow of Montgreenan.
1803 - - - Robt. Glasgow of Montgreenan.
1804 - - - Col. John Boyle of Shewalton.
1805 - - - Col. John Boyle of Shewalton.
1806 to 1808 - William Blair of Blair.
1809 - - - Robert Davidson of Drumley.
1810 - - Robert Davidson of Drumley.
1811 - - - Alex. M'Gown of Smithston.
1812 - - - Alex. M'Gown of Smithston.
1813 - - - William Davidson of Air.
1814 - - - William Davidson of Air.
1815 - - - Patrick Maxwell, Irvine.
1816 - - - Patrick Maxwell, Irvine.
1817 - - - James Crichton.
1818 to 1820 - Col. Alex. Hamilton of Grange.
1821 to 1822 - Sir Alex. Boswell, of Auchinleck.
1823 to 1825 - Col. Alex. Hamilton of Grange.
1826 - - - John Smith of Swindridgemuir.
1827 - - - John Smith of Swindridgemuir.
1828 - - - Robert Montgomerie.
1829 - - - Robert Montgomerie.
1830 - - - G. Fullarton, yr., of Fullarton.
1831 - - - George Johnstone of Redburn.
1832 - - - George Johnstone of Redburn.
1833 - - - Wm. Millar of Monkcastle.
1834 - - - Wm. Millar of Monkcastle.
1835 - - - George Fullarton of Fullarton.
1836 - - - George Fullarton of Fullarton.
1837 to 1839 - George Johnstone of Redburn.
1840 - - - George Fullarton of Fullarton.
1841 - - - George Fullarton of Fullarton.
1842 to 1845 - George Johnstone of Redburn.
1846 - - - George Fullarton of Fullarton.
1847 . - - George Fullarton of Fullarton.
1848 to 1850 - George Johnstone of Redburn.
1851 - - - George Fullarton of Fullarton.
1852 - - - George Fullarton of Fullarton.
1853 to 1856 - J. Boyle Gray of Cranberry Moss.
1857 - - - George Johnston of Redburn.
1858 - - - W. Cochran-Patrick of Ladyland.
1859 to 1864 - Sir Jas. Fergusson, Bart., of Kilkerran.
1865 - - - Hugh Conn, Adela Cottage.
1866 - - - Robert Wylie, Castlepen.
1867 - - - Robert Wylie, Castlepen.
1868 to 1878 - Col. Wm. Mure of Caldwell.
1879 to 1889 - R. W. Cochran-Patrick of Woodside and Ladyland.
1890 - - - The Hon. T. Cochrane, Dankeith.

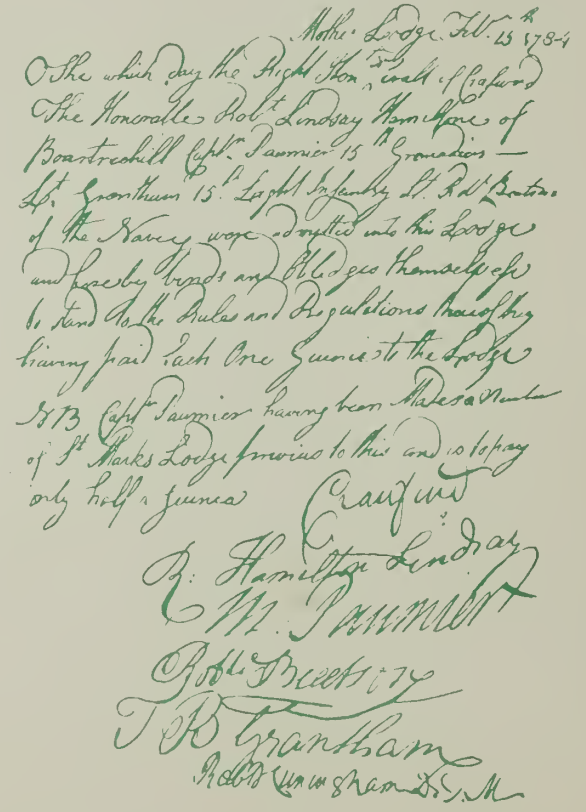
From this list we at once note that the title of the head of the Lodge has not always been the same. He was in early ages a Grand Deacon, in later times a Grand Master. Nor is this all the change. The records show that sometimes the Chief was called not only Master and Grand Master, but as early as 1736, he was called "The Right Worshipful Master." In 1771 we find the title of the Master expressed thus Our Right Worshipful and Honourable Grand Master." While in 1778, when Archibald, eleventh Earl of Eglinton, was presiding, he was called "the Most Worshipful Grand Master." And this last is the form in which the present

president of the lodge is addressed. Just at this time, indeed, and for a little time past, the great authority in matters Masonic, the Grand Lodge, is a little inclined to quarrel with the venerable Mother Lodge for using this title in addressing the Master. But Mother Kilwinning, though most obedient to the Grand Lodge in all that is honourable, does not see its way to lay aside an appellation which it bore when it amalgamated with the Grand Lodge, and it thinks that it is just a little unkind on the part of the Grand Lodge to ask it to do so. Meantime, therefore, the old Mother holds on its old way with its old title. But she does not do so offensively. Oh, some may think that, apart from the request of those so high in authority, the Master of Mother Kilwinning might be quite appropriately addressed with a title less high sounding. Perhaps he might. But the Free Masons don't like to give up old names, and if they are mere Cowans—persons who don't know the word—who make this criticism, they should remember that, perhaps for all they know, the title may be intimately associated with Masonry, and so cannot be given up. At any rate, the chief office-bearer of the Mother Lodge is addressed in the manner indicated. *Pace*, Grand Lodge. Pity the old Mother's *vanity* if you will. She is very proud of everything old.

But there are numerous other office-bearers. At one time, indeed, they were not so numerous as now. But at the present time, the Lodge is under the management of Wardens and a Treasurer, and Secretary and Bible Bearer, and Chaplain and Deacon, and an S.D. and an S.S., and a J.D. and an I.P., and others. Some of these office-bearers are of comparatively recent appointment. No Chaplain, for example, seems to have been appointed till the beginning of the present century, when Dr. William Ritchie, minister of Kilwinning, was set aside to the office. From that time, however, except on occasional years, this post has always been filled. For some time after the institution of a Chaplain, perhaps because the office was comparatively new fangled, the Lodge took good use of this office-bearer, he being appointed to preach before the Brethren at the annual meeting before the election of representatives for the ensuing year. And it is noteworthy that the Chaplains all seem to have been able men at the beginning of the century. Almost all the references to their sermons are after this fashion, which is the record referring to the services of the Rev. James Henderson, of Irvine, and bears date 21st December, 1808: "The Chaplain did preach a very suitable and excellent discourse." After all, however, these criticisms may not have been so much due to the pre-eminent ability of the ministers as to the kindliness of the critics. Certainly even in our own day the Free Masons everywhere are said to report very kindly of the public ministrations of their Chaplains—ministrations which, it is pleasant to notice, are being much more frequent than in former days.

It is sad to be forced to add that we know very little now even respecting the great men who, generation after generation, presided over the Mother Lodge. Looking at the list, we observe that the first on the roll is

that of Johnne Barclay, Burgess of Irvine. No doubt this was a son, or perhaps the grandson, of that Archibald Barclay who represented the Mother Lodge at Edinburgh in 1599, and of whom Williame Schaw said that he "behaifit himself verie honestli and cairfullie." And the seventh on the list, in 1648, is John Smyth, who was probable brother or son of the Hew Smyth, in an upper chamber of whose house at the "Croce" (of which we shall have something more to say) the brethren met for years. This John Smyth was evidently an ardent Mason, as we find the same name occurring in 1651, 1655, 1659, 1661, 1663, 1667, and 1671, and very likely the name refers to the same person, for though the Smyth family is ubiquitous, there was not likely to be more than one John Smyth in these years in the little village of Segton. But John Smyth passed away to the great majority, and so his name ceases to occur. Three years after Mr. John Smith's last appearance on the honorary roll we find, printed in parenthesis, the name of Lord William Cochrane. Lord Cochrane did not become Grand Deacon, having been satisfied with the post of Warden. He took an active part in the stirring times in which he lived, and like a true patriot, disapproved of the force the Government employed in its attempts to put down our forefathers when seeking to worship God according to their conscience. He died in 1679. A notable fact in connection with Lord William Cochrane is that one of his lineal descendants is our present Grand Master. Nor should we fail to observe that the wife of our Master, Lady Gertrude Cochrane, is also represented in the Lodge, though the name is not on the roll, her Ladyship being descended from the Earl of Crawford, whose initiation, with his Lordship's signature, is entered in the records in the following manner:


Mother Lodge Kil. 15th
1784
The which day the Right Hon.ble Earl of Crafford
The Honorable Mr. Lindsay Honble Sons of
Boardrochill Capt. Saumier 15th Grenadiers
Lt. Grantham 15th Light Infantry Lt. Robt. Baxter
of the Navy were admitted into this Lodge
and hereby bynds and Obleges themselves
to stand to the Rules and Regulations thereof by
having paid Each One Guinea to the Lodge
Capt. Saumier having been Master
of St. Marks Lodge Irvine to this and is to pay
only half a Guinea
Crawford
R. Hamilton Lindsay
Wm. Saumier
Robt. Baxter
T. Grantham
Robt. Wm. Graham D. G. M.

Looking further down the list of Grand Deacons we come to a well-known name, that of David Frew, who in 1712 and 1722 occupied the chief place among the Masons. One might conjecture that this was the son of Matthew Frew, who was a man of supreme importance in Kilwinning about the close of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century, and whose tombstone may yet be seen, not over-well cared for, in the old Church Yard, to the south of the Parish Church. And among the Grand Masters we note the name of the the unfortunate Earl of Kilmarnock. He presided over the Mother Lodge in the year 1741. Four years later he took part with the Stewarts, was taken prisoner after the misfortunes of Culloden, and on August 18th, 1746, on Tower-hill, he was beheaded as a traitor. He was only forty-two years of age, and with him his title became extinct. A melancholy interest also attaches to Sir Alexander Boswell, of Auchinleck, who was Grand Master during the year 1821. Sir Alexander was a zealous Free Mason, and devoted to Mother Kilwinning. He kindly wrote many verses in her praise, and sang them too. Here is a taste of his muse, which consists of the first verse of a song, sung by him at his installation in December, 1820:

> "Ye sons of Kilwinning our Mother revered,
> While memory lasts we shall honour her still:
> And here in her hall, to each other endeared,
> The warm grip we'll give, and the goblet we'll fill."

Alas! alas! A month or two after presiding at the annual festival in 1821, he was fatally wounded in a duel with a political opponent, on a beautiful morning in spring, in a grassy field not far from the village of Auchtertool in Fifeshire. At the end of the roll of Grand Masters we have several well-known personages, three of whom are still taking an active and prominent part in the affairs of the nation: - Sir James Fergusson, Bart., of Kilkerran; R. W. Cochran-Patrick of Woodside: and the present M.W.M., The Hon. T. Cochrane, M.P. for North Ayrshire, whose zeal in the cause of Free Masonry, and whose interest in the welfare of Mother Kilwinning are widely known and very highly appreciated. In this reference to the high officials of Mother Kilwinning it would be unpardonable not to notice specially three representatives of the noble house of Eglinton, who, between them, occupied the chief position of the Lodge during no fewer than 44 years. The first of these was Alexander, the 8th Earl, who was made Grand Deacon in 1674. His Lordship's career was a somewhat remarkable one. It was expected that by a good marriage he would retrieve the then somewhat fallen fortunes of the family. But love in peer or peasant is a factor not easily dealt with. Certainly Principal Baillie, at one time parish minister of Kilwinning, and a devoted adherent to the house of Eglinton, writes thus pathetically with respect to the Earl's first marriage:—"The Earl of Eglinton's heir, the Master of Montgomerie, convoying his father to London, runns away without any advice, and marries a daughter of my Lord Dumfries, who is a broken man, when he was sure of my Lady Balclough's (Buccleuch) marriage, the greatest match in Brittain. This unexpected pranck is worse to all his kinn than his death would have been." Ah, well, but the "daughter of my Lord Dumfries"

had an excellent son who made up for any lack of dowry. He made his father rich. Alexander, the 10th Earl, became Grand Master in 1742, when he was very young, being only about twenty years of age. But from his youth up he displayed great force of character, showed that he had a mind of his own, and that he was bent on seeing for himself. A glimpse of the kind of man he was may be gathered from the following notice respecting him, by one who knew him most intimately. "The Earl is an essentially good and right man, and every honest man concerned about him will have credit of him. This I prophecie, but I prophecie likewise that he must have his swing out; and I hope, as well as wish, it may be soon out." The prophesy became reality. The tenth Earl of Eglinton became a good and great man, and perhaps it is not too much to say that, but for him, the agricultural interests of the West of Scotland would not have been as they are. "He traversed every corner of each of his extensive estates, arranged the divisions and marches of farms, laid off roads, plantations and ditches, opened quarries, etc.," and that says not a little for one who lived a hundred and fifty years ago. But his end was tragic. In the year 1768 he was Grand Master of Kilwinning Lodge for the last time. In 1769, on October 4th, he was shot on the beach near Ardrossan by Mungo Campbell, an excise officer. His Lordship had come upon Campbell while poaching, and in the altercation which followed, Campbell, in the heat of passion, fired and mortally wounded him. His Lordship was never married, and he was therefore succeeded by his brother Archibald, who became the eleventh Earl. For nearly a quarter-of-a-century Earl Archibald was Grand Master of the Masons. He so frequently, so generously, aided the Lodge, that on 21st December, 1778, he was appointed the Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Mother Lodge for life. His Lordship was a peculiarly active man, and was therefore in this like his deceased brother. But his tastes were entirely different. Earl Alexander was a man of peace. Earl Archibald was a man of war. And yet he endeavoured by means of agents to carry on improvements in his large estates, which his brother had projected. And then he was a great Free Mason. If not always, therefore, yet still often, his thoughts must have turned on peace. For Free Masons are essentially men of peace. He represented Ayrshire in Parliament in 1761, and died at Eglinton Castle, Oct. 30th, 1796. Surely it is strange that the faithful historian of Mother Kilwinning requires to add that, since the death of the eleventh Earl, none of the representatives of this noble house have been Masters of Mother Kilwinning. Is it possible that this should continue?

Before passing from this reference to the office-bearers of the Lodge, we must state that, in 1777, the brethren determined on procuring a Seal for its charters and other authoritative papers, and agreed that it was to be "cut out in silver." This, however, was a costly matter, and the coffers of the Lodge were low. At length, on 27th October, 1779, the Seal was ready. And it was paid too, but not without special efforts, some doubling and even trebling their subscriptions, and the dues raised all round—"Charter dues to £1 11s. 6d.; Gentleman Mason's diploma, sealed, 5s.;

operative, 2s 6d." Here is a copy of the seal that was obtained with so much difficulty—

And what of the hall, the house, the room in which the brethren of Mother Kilwinning have met during all these long years of its history? We know that from 1599 they met regularly on the 20th day of December every year. They had many meetings at other times, but this was a statutory meeting. I don't know, indeed, if they always met on this day. Perhaps this was one of the new arrangements suggested by Williame Schaw in 1599. At anyrate, from 1599 to 1779 this was the day of the annual meeting. But an alteration was made in 1779. On the 20th December of that year, "The brethren resolved to resume the antient day of meeting, viz., St. Thomas's day, 21st December, next anniversary, having by an error continued many years past," assembled on the 20th December. The fact is that the Lodge of Mother Kilwinning was dedicated to St. Thomas, and the brethren discovered in 1779 that St. Thomas's day falls on the 21st, not on the 20th December, and they determined, like wise people, to rectify their mistake. Nor must we say too much about their ignorance. There were no diaries worth speaking of at their command. And it was evidently a common mistake to regard the 20th as St. Thomas's Day. On 20th December, 1735, we find in the entry that this was "commonly called St. Thomas's Day." Who knows, as already hinted, but that Mr. Schaw himself may have led them into this error! But, at anyrate, on St. Thomas's Day, the 21st December, 1779, Mother Kilwinning Lodge held its statutory anniversary meeting, and it has done so on that day ever since. And where have the brethren been meeting during all these years of its long existence? Well, we cannot tell where about in our old town the brethren assembled till the year 1599, or thereabout. Before that time it probably met in some of the rooms or halls in connection with the old Abbey. Who knows but in the Chapter House, whose ruins still arrest our attention, those grand "head courts" of which we hear so much from tradition were held. Perhaps on that stone seat, now so much decayed, the Earl of Gloucester and Robert the Bruce may have rested. Who knows but these blackened walls may have resounded with the discussions of Kings and Abbots as they reasoned with each other how best they might repair the havoc which at this time their

neighbours, the English, wrought upon the temple which De Morville had raised? Who knows? But we do know where the brethren met in 1599. According to Schaw's statute of that date, they met "within the Kirk of Kilwynning." No longer, it will be observed, are we referred to the stately Abbey. The Abbey was by this time in ruins, and very likely the Protestants of the day were meeting in some corner of its capacious walls which they had fitted up for the purpose, and it was called "the Kirk of Kilwynning." In 1599 Mr. Alexander Wreittoun would be the minister, and evidently he had no dislike to the Free Masons meeting in the place in which public worship was held. Why should he? Free Masonry, then as now, teaches its votaries to respect all that is holy, and to worship and bow down before Him who is the great architect of the universe.

But the brethern did not probably continue long after 1599 to meet in the Kirk of Kilwynning. Certainly, on 20th December, 1643, we find "the Court of the Lodge of Kilwinning assembled in the upper chamber of the dwelling-house of Hew Smith, at the Croce of Kilwinning." And where would that be? Probably at the place now called the Cross Brae. It is usually supposed, indeed, that the ancient Cross of Kilwinning stood at the top of the Corsehill, but if so, it had in all likelihood been shifted by 1643 to the site on which it now stands. For it does not appear likely that the Free Masons would have their meeting place at the top of the Corsehill. And yet it's a long cry back to 1643. And at that time the present Main Street may not have been so central as it is now. Besides, the Corsehill was really the site of Old Kilwinning. But there are the remains of a very old pedestal of a cross, which, according to tradition, was brought long ago from the Corsehill, at the middle of the Cross Brae, and perhaps it seems most likely that near where it now stands, in the house of Hew Smith, the brethren held their Masonic Court about the year 1643.

Then the place of meeting was again changed. Here is an entry in the records "Lodge of the Free and Accepted Masons of Kilwinning, held within the dwelling-house of Alexander Cunningham, Wright, there, upon the 20th day of December, 1735 years, commonly called St. Thomas's Day, the usual anniversary of this Lodge." Where Alexander Cunningham's house was the writer cannot tell. But wherever it was, the Masons about this time held their meetings in it. By-and-by, however, the brethren became earnestly bent on having a house of their own in which to hold their meetings. In 1745 "It was proposed to have a proper place built for their meeting." For two years this proposal seems to have lain on the shelf. On 4th November, 1747, a step in advance was taken. At a select meeting anent the building of a Lodge, "the members present were unanimously of opinion that a list should be made up of all the surviving members, or such gentlemen as have been made Masons in the Lodge, and that a certain tax, not exceeding the sum of . . . . be laid upon each of such brethren. At the same time, not to limit their generosity in case of their choosing to exceed this regulation. Also, that all Lodges that take the name of Kilwinning, and who own this Lodge as their mother, be applied to for what

contribution they shall think fit." Evidently the Free Masons of 1747 were bent on business, but it was long before their dream was realised. The project, indeed, seems at this time to have got its quietus. Perhaps it was difficult to fix the exact amount according to which each was to be taxed, or the daughter lodges may not have responded very readily. Certainly year after year passed and no more definite step was taken. But in 1770 the question was revived. In 1771, however, we find that our "Right Worshipful and Honourable Grand Master," who at the time was Archibald, the eleventh Earl of Eglinton, offered the Masons his courthouse as a Lodge, and that a tack of it was signed in the same year. This for a time again put back the idea of having a house all to themselves. But only for a time. In 1774 the brethren determined to have a Lodge built with all convenient speed. But it was a slow process. At length, however, on 24th March, 1779, the foundation stone of the new Lodge was laid on "the stance of the old courthouse," and the estimated cost of the building was £277. This was the Lodge with which many of us were familiar, and no wonder, since by an archway underneath it many of us for years wended our way to the place of prayer in the Parish Church. The following is an excellent photograph of this building, which stood on the site of the present principal entrance to the Church and Abbey Ruins, and which was removed in 1893, when the present Lodge was ready for use :

It would be a long story to tell about the difficulties the brethren had in paying that old Lodge: for, indeed, it never was fully paid till some thirty years ago. Here is a bit of as neat work in raising the wind in this connection as any one could desire. It is found in a letter sent from Robert Laughlan of Redburn, in 1779, to Brother Cunningham in

Ireland. "I am obliged by every laudable means to raise money. I beg that you will obtain the Charter dues and five guineas promised. . . . The new Lodge is nearly finished, and if money comes in quickly, our first anniversary meeting will be held in it. If not, we, the Committee, must be distressed. Pray do the most you can for us. You'll remember your own guinea." Mr. Laughlan could plead. He is quite pathetic. Perhaps, however, it should be noted, that no wonder there were difficulties in the way. There were no bazaars in those days, and the only external source of income coming to the brethren was procured from rather a strange source—viz., from annual dancing parties, and from the pupils attending a dancing school which, in 1795, was conducted in the Mason Lodge by one William Dick. One by the way wonders what the ministers of the time (there were only two of them) said to this. Perhaps they said nothing. Certainly the parish minister, Mr. Pollock, was pre-eminently a sensible man, and he may have seen no harm in the youngsters of Kilwinning tripping the light fantastic toe. But he was before his time if he did so, and very likely he and the Masonic brethren had some tiff over this business.

But at anyrate, the Free Masons of Kilwinning got a new house all to themselves in the year 1779, in which they could store all the secret things they possess—the goat, for example, and the chains, and the other things with which a curious world associate Free Masonry. And that building suited the purposes of the brethren for years. But alas, as the old inscription has it:—

"The earth builds on the earth
Castles and towers;
The earth says to the earth,
All shall be ours."

Though, doubtless, the Masons of 1779 exercised the duties of their Craft according to the best methods, especially when building a house for their own meetings, the building, in time, began to show symptoms of decay. Even, indeed, in 1865, it was condemned so far as any festive assemblies were concerned. The ordinary meetings of the brethren could be held in it, but not the annual gatherings, when daughter Lodges delight to send numerous representatives to pay their respects to the Old Mother Lodge, and wish her years of continued prosperity. And from the date on which the old Lodge was condemned, there was every year, especially at the annual festivals, a "big speak" about the necessity for either getting the building rendered safe, or a new one erected in its place. Building committees were at length formed and suggestions for raising the money discussed; and in 1883 plans for a new hall, at the cost of £2000, were laid before the brethren at the annual meeting on 21st December. More than this. At this meeting the plan shown was actually approved of, and the building committee "re-appointed with full powers to proceed as early as possible, or as soon as circumstances will permit." Alas, the circumstances did not permit for a long time. Seven years indeed passed in talking, suggesting, advising, planning, but not in taking any definite step. At length, however, in 1890, the matter was moved by men who felt that delays

were actually becoming dangerous, that the old Lodge was in such a state that "the principal couples of the roof were broken and was causing the walls to spread outwards," and consequently that the time had come for action. The question, therefore, which was brought up in December, 1890, was this, whether the old Lodge was to be repaired at once, or whether a new Lodge was to be built at once. There was to be no more dilly-dallying; something was to be done immediately. Of course the most determined men could not take any important step without consideration. But active work was now being done. Accordingly, after the whole business had been fairly discussed, these three proposals were made at a meeting in 1891:—

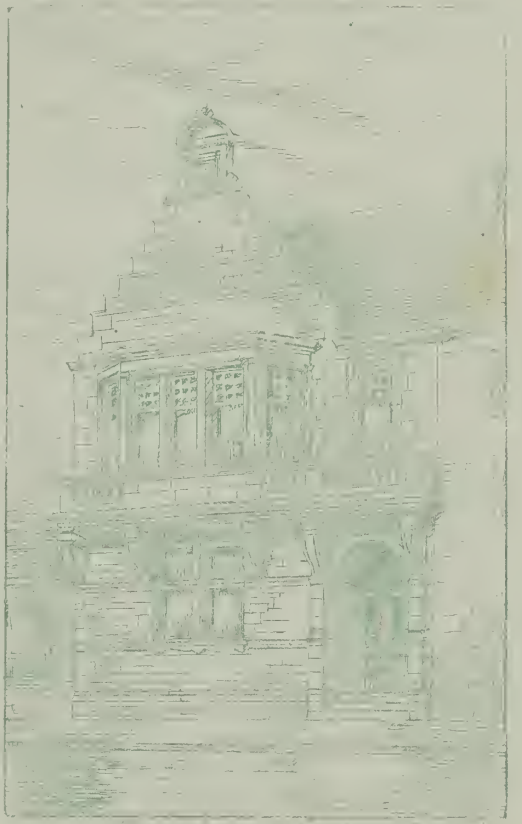
1. That the present building should be altered and renovated at a cost of £800.

2. That the Lodge be rebuilt entirely on the present site.

3. That a Lodge Room, Hall, etc., be erected on a new site.

On the vote being taken it was found that the third motion was carried by a large majority.

From that day the business went on apace. The late Lord Eglinton most kindly granted the new site and the heritors agreed to carry out certain improvements in connection with the removal of the old Lodge, and on 17th Sept., 1892, the foundation stone was laid by our M.W. Master, in presence of a large gathering of Free Masons and an enthusiastic crowd from all the surrounding district. And here is a photograph of the building, whose foundation stone was then laid.



Externally, it may be said the Lodge is very pretty; internally, it is perfection.

Alas! alas! when this Lodge was built for Mother Kilwinning, when thus the old lady had a habitation somewhat

befitting her illustrious career, it was found that she was deep in debt. Many friends had come to the rescue, friends from all parts of the world had sent in contributions, but when all told, these only amounted to £500, and £1500 more were needed in order that the Old Mother Lodge could declare herself independent. What was to be done? Debt is always a bad thing. Besides, it was felt that it was somehow a kind of shame that Mother Kilwinning should be in bond to anyone. At last a bright thought was suggested. It was expressed thus—"Let's have a Bazaar." And all felt that this thought expressed the true solution of the difficulty. And "let's have it in Glasgow" was an extension of the thought, which equally delighted all concerned. Glasgow is rich, Glasgow has many ardent members and admirers of Mother Kilwinning, Glasgow is noted for its liberality, even the names of some Glasgow gentlemen were condescended upon as the names of those who would probably be willing to aid, therefore, was the conclusion, let the Bazaar be in Glasgow. It would not be becoming to mention the names to which reference has just been made, but there was one name very prominently mentioned as that of one who had in many ways, during many years, acted a most kindly part towards the venerable Mother Lodge, a name which it would not only be false modesty to conceal, but which it would be wrong not to mention distinctly in a notice like this, the name of Major Allan, whose name, indeed, is a household word, and whose figure is as familiarly known as it is warmly welcomed in all Masonic circles throughout the length and breadth of the land.

And now, while these lines are being penned, many busy heads and hands, with Lady Gertrude Cochrane leading on, are engaged in preparing for the Bazaar. That it will be a success no one doubts. Every true Mason will feel that he must do something to relieve the old Mother of the cankering care that accompanies debt. For every true Free Mason knows that the venerable Mother of Masonry in Scotland is worthy of his regard, and that a true brother Mason, the late Brother M'Kay, the Historian of Kilmarnock, sang truly, as well as sweetly, when of Mother Kilwinning he wrote:—

"Wi' open heart she lo'es us a',
Whate'er our lot may be, man,
And aft she prays that a' her bairns
In love may aye agree, man;
For love she kens can yield a charm
To cheer life's fleeting scenes, man,
And lead to yonder Lodge aboon,
Where joy unclouded reigns, man.

"Yes, muckle sense and worth is hers,
And proud she weel may be, man,
For even Kings themselves have sat
Fu' kindly by her knee, man;
Then lang lang, may she keep her feet,
To speak, or sing, or crack, man;
And aye be blithe, as she has been,
To bid us welcome back, man."

But while we have nothing but confidence in the success of the Bazaar, every member of Mother Kilwinning looks forward with not a little anxiety to the 5th, 6th, and 7th December, 1895, and very earnestly commends the project to all lovers of all that is ancient and estimable, and especially to all leal and loving Free and Accepted Masons.

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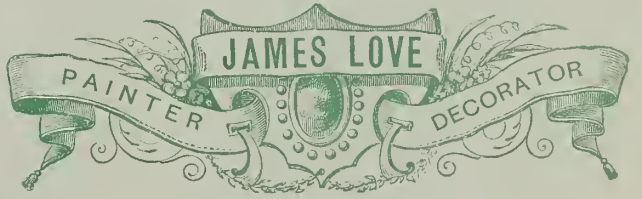

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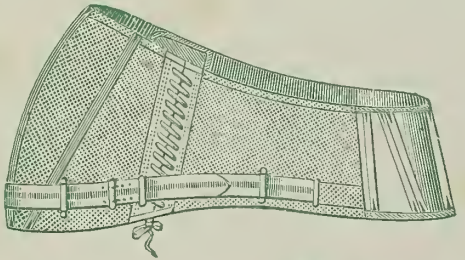

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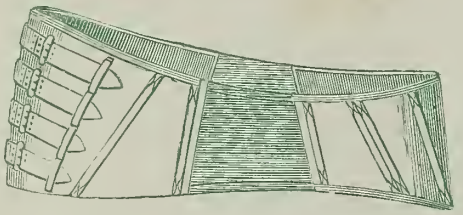

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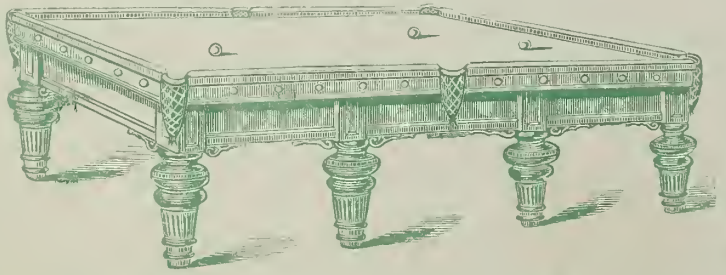

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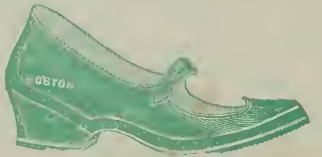

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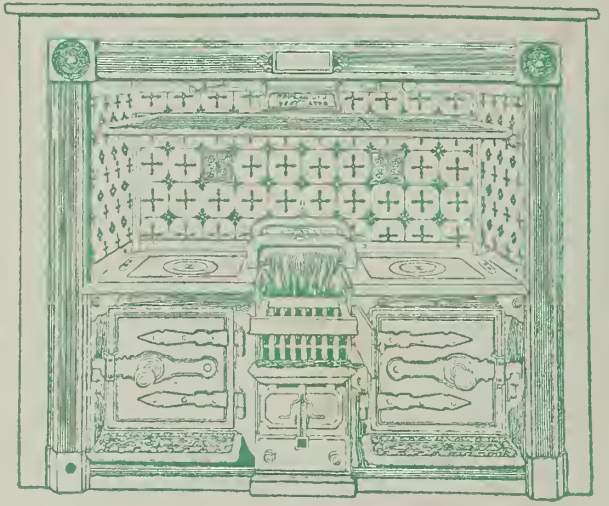

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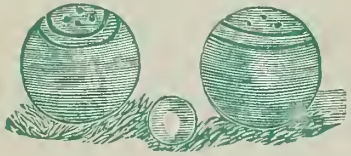

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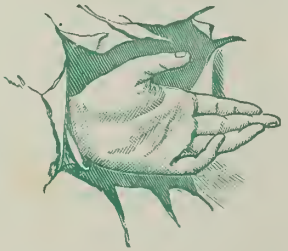

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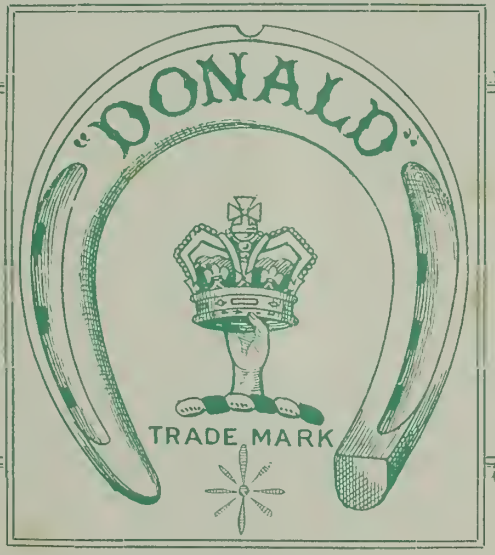

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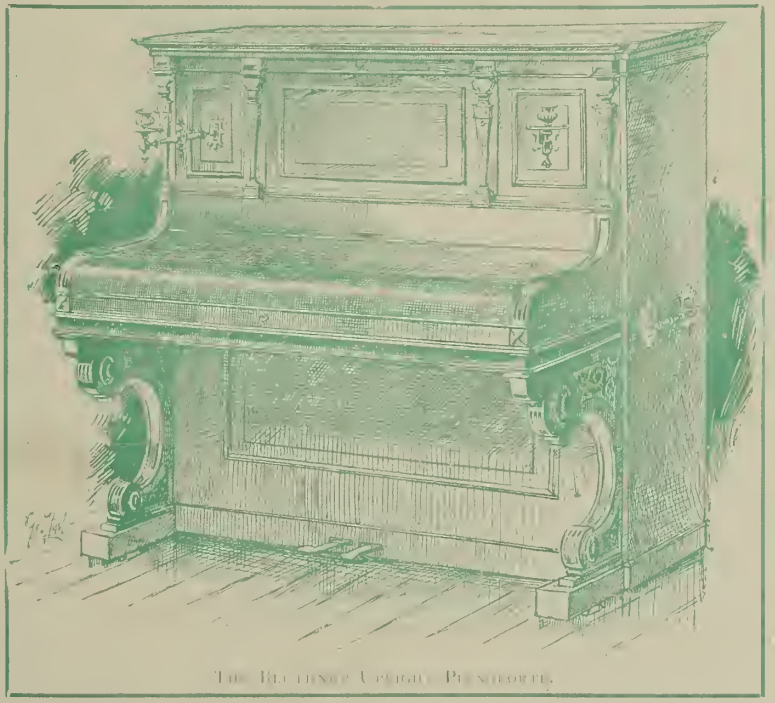

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